

MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

The Regular Session of the Municipal Council of the Municipality of the County of Colchester was conducted in-person and virtually combined, on Thursday, September 25, 2025, at 6:00 pm.

In peace and in friendship, and in the spirit of truth and reconciliation, it was acknowledged that the Municipality of Colchester is in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq.

Roll Call

Mayor Christine Blair, Chair	
Councillor Paul Weatherby	District 1
Dep. Mayor Laurie Sandeson	District 2
Councillor Sheldon Richardson	District 3
Councillor Mike Cooper	District 4
Councillor Tim Johnson	District 5
Councillor Nigel Leggett	District 6
Councillor Sherry Martell	District 7
Councillor Lisa Patton	District 8
Councillor Marie Benoit	District 9
Councillor Charlene Fletcher	District 10
Councillor Allan Kennedy	District 11

Staff Present

Dan Troke, Chief Administrative Officer
 Michelle Boudreau, Director of Public Works
 Jessica Rushton, Balefill and Compost Operations Manager
 Scott Fraser, Director of Corporate Services
 Paul Smith, Director of Community Development
 Dennis James, Municipal Solicitor
 Tracey Veno, Recording Secretary
 Jenn Martin, Economic Development Officer
 Devin Trefry, Research Policy and Community Engagement Officer
 Jeanette Himmelman, Systems Analyst
 Craig Burgess, Recreation Manager
 Joanna Burris, Sustainability Planner

Approval of Agenda

Moved by Councillor Richardson, seconded by Councillor Kennedy

“That the agenda be approved with the following amendments:

- Move item #8, Award of Contract – Tidal Bore Road McClures Brook Multi-use Trail to the end of agenda, to be dealt with following legal advice in closed session;
- Add item #16, Legal Advice in closed session;
- Add item #17, Negotiations, in closed session; and,
- Add item #18, Personnel Matter in closed session.” Carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

Moved by Councillor Weatherby, seconded by Councillor Johnson

“That the minutes from August 28, 2025, be approved as presented.” Carried unanimously.

Business Arising from Minutes

None.

Standing Committee Reports and Recommendations

Audit Committee – report from Audit Committee meeting of September 16, 2025, and presentation to Council of Consolidated Financial Statements.

Scott Fraser, Director of Corporate Services, presented a high-level overview of the consolidated financial statements for the year ending March 31, 2025. Highlights of the presentation included a brief review of the consolidated statement of operations and surplus, annual and accumulated surpluses, consolidated statement of financial position, changes in net assets and liabilities, tangible capital assets and statement of cash flow. It is the opinion of the Auditor that it is a clean audit report, and the statements fairly represent the financial position of the Municipality.

Moved by Deputy Mayor Sandeson, seconded by Councillor Johnson

“That Council accepts and adopts the 2024/25 Consolidated Financial Statements as prepared by Doane Grant Thornton; and,

That the Mayor and CAO be authorized to sign the necessary documentation relative to the 2024-25 Consolidated Financial Statements.” Carried unanimously.

Deputy Mayor Sandeson, Chair of Council Committee, presented the report from the meeting held September 11, 2025.

Fire Dispatch Services Contract Extension

Councillors Richardson, Leggett, and Fletcher declared a conflict and recused themselves from discussion on this matter.

Moved by Deputy Mayor Sandeson, seconded by Councillor Weatherby

“That Council approves the Municipality enter a two-year extension with Valley Communications Inc. to provide Fire Dispatch Services for a total price of \$215,453.73 excluding taxes.” Carried unanimously.

Tatamagouche Water Utility Committee Terms of Reference

Deputy Mayor Sandeson advised that at the September 11th Committee meeting, following a motion to amend the Terms of Reference for the Debert Water Utility Committee to allow either the Deputy Mayor or an alternate member of Council to serve on the Committee, Council also discussed making a similar amendment to the Tatamagouche Water Utility Committee Terms of Reference. However, no formal motion was made at that time to implement the change. Council agreed to revise the motion to reflect the amendment.

Moved by Deputy Mayor Sandeson, seconded by Councillor Martell

“That Council approves the proposed Terms of Reference for the Tatamagouche Water Utility Committee be adopted as amended.” Carried unanimously.

Debert Water Utility Committee Terms of Reference

Moved by Deputy Mayor Sandeson, seconded by Councillor Benoit

“That Council approves that a Debert Water Utility Committee be established; and,

That the proposed Terms of Reference for the Debert Water Utility Committee be adopted as amended.” Carried unanimously.

Tatamagouche Water Utility Three-Year Operating Budget

Moved by Deputy Mayor Sandeson, seconded by Councillor Martell

“That Council approves the three-year Tatamagouche Water Utility operating budget (2025/26, 2026/27 and 2027/28) as presented.” Carried unanimously.

Debert Water Utility Three-Year Operating Budget

Moved by Deputy Mayor Sandeson, seconded by Councillor Benoit

“That Council approves the three-year Debert Water Utility operating budget (2025/26, 2026/27 and 2027/28) as presented.” Carried unanimously.

RECC Financial Request

Moved by Deputy Mayor Sandeson, seconded by Councillor Weatherby

“That Council approves the purchase of the new chiller unit in the amount of \$320,630, with funds being from the RECC Capital Reserve.” Carried unanimously.

Personnel – Non-union Employee Salary Review

Moved by Deputy Mayor Sandeson, seconded by Councillor Kennedy

“That Council adopts the amended non-union salary scales, as outlined in closed session on September 11, 2025.” Carried unanimously.

Tatamagouche Water Utility Committee – minutes of meeting held on August 27, 2025

Moved by Councillor Weatherby, seconded by Councillor Martell

“That the minutes of the Tatamagouche Water Utility Committee meeting held on August 27, 2025, be received.” Carried unanimously.

Flood Advisory Committee – minutes of meeting held on September 2, 2025

Moved by Councillor Patton, seconded by Councillor Cooper

“That the minutes of the Flood Advisory Committee meeting held on September 2, 2025, be received.” Carried unanimously.

ACTION ITEMS**Truro Curling Club
Revitalization Project –
Request for Funding**

The Recreation Manager provided an overview of the Truro Curling Club’s Revitalization Project, highlighting the Club’s urgent need to replace its aging ice-making infrastructure. The presentation included the findings of consultant IB Storey, project tender details, and an estimated total project cost of \$700,000.

In terms of funding, the Club has secured \$500,000 from the Province and \$20,000 from the Town of Truro. A fundraising committee has also been established to help raise additional funds for the project. The Club also has a betterment fund that has been approved for use should the fundraising efforts fall short.

The Truro Curling Club is requesting \$15,000 from the Municipality. If approved, this contribution would be an unbudgeted expense.

Moved by Councillor Johnson, seconded by Councillor Benoit

“That Council approves the request from the Truro Curling Club in the amount of \$15,000 for the capital revitalization project.” Carried unanimously.

Deer Feeding By-law Second Reading

The Research, Policy, and Community Engagement Officer, provided a summary of the Deer Feeding By-law. The intent of the By-law is to help reduce human-wildlife conflicts and protect both deer and the community by discouraging unnatural feeding that can contribute to overpopulation, property damage, and safety risks. The Department of Natural Resources has recommended the implementation of a Deer Feeding By-law as part of the Municipality’s ongoing efforts to address the growing population of deer in the urban core through a managed deer hunt.

First Reading of the By-law was approved at the August Council meeting with notice of Second Reading advertised on the municipal website in accordance with the Municipal Government Act. To date, no public feedback has been received regarding this By-law.

Brief discussion was held on enforcement of the By-law, specifically if complaints would remain confidential, similar to the process for Dangerous or Unightly Premises complaints. The Municipal Solicitor advised that if an issued ticket under the By-law was resisted, the matter would be required to go before the courts and the witness could be required to provide evidence, therefore, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

Further discussion was held on educating the public on the By-law on social media and placement of content in the newsletter.

Moved by Councillor Johnson, seconded by Councillor Martell

“That Council approves, by way of Second Reading, Chapter 60 - Deer Feeding By-law.” Carried unanimously.

Hudson Street Housing

The Director of Public Works presented an overview of the item dealing with the 40-acre lot on Hudson Street in Debert, designated for residential development. The report included lot details, archeological requirements, information on the 2022 Concept Plan, past request for Expressions of Interest for development, concerns regarding lot size and lack of servicing, Councils desire to advance residential development, estimated servicing costs and approved budgets, and options for consideration.

Discussion took place on opening the opposite side of Hudson Street, as well as archeological requirements of doing so. The importance of continued community engagement throughout the development process was also discussed.

Moved by councillor Benoit, seconded by Councillor Cooper

“That Council approves the extension of sewer services on Hudson Street at an estimated cost of \$800,000, and that source of funds be the Debert Service Extensions, Development Growth funds as approved in Council’s capital budget; and,

That Council directs staff retain the services of an external consultant to prepare an updated concept plan for the remaining un-serviced areas of the Hudson Street Lot.” Carried unanimously.

November Presentation Meeting Date As a follow up to discussions at the September Committee meeting, the CAO advised that staff have confirmed with presenters their availability to present on November 3rd instead of November 4th, to accommodate those Council members attending the NSFM Fall Conference.

Moved by Councillor Weatherby, seconded by Councillor Kennedy

“That Council approves changing the November Presentation meeting from Tuesday, November 4th to Monday, November 3rd.” Carried unanimously.

Correspondence – ACTION

Bruce Beveridge, Project EIT An email dated August 28, 2025, requesting a letter of support from Council for the Pictou Landing Community Solar Project in Newton Mills.

Discussion included decommissioning of the solar project, zoning considerations, and opportunities through the NS Solar projects encouraging solar developments.

Moved by Councillor Cooper, seconded by Deputy Mayor Sandeson

“That Council approves a letter of support for the Pictou Landing Community Solar Project in Newton Mills.” Carried unanimously.

Greg Muise, Chief, Onslow Belmont Fire Brigade A letter to County Council received September 7, 2025, requesting waiving of tip fees for material from their Annual Harvest Sale and Auction on September 27th.

Moved by Councillor Benoit, seconded by Councillor Patton

“That Council approves the request from the Onslow Belmont Fire Brigade to waive tipping fees for material from the Annual Harvest Sale and Auction on September 27th.” Carried unanimously.

Eleanor and Roderick Norrie A letter to Mayor and Council dated September 15, 2025, requesting a variance for PID 20375473, Dickson Drive, North River.

Moved by Councillor Johnson, seconded by Councillor Kennedy

“That the request from Eleanor and Roderick Norrie for a variance for 20375473, Dickson Drive, North River be referred to staff.” Carried unanimously.

Kevin Kennedy, Commissioner and Chair, Village of Bible Hill Commission A letter to Mayor and Council dated September 17, 2025, requesting adoption of a resolution in support of their GRID funding program application for a proposed project of 58 new concrete sidewalk ramps with tactile walking surface indicators.

Moved by Councillor Weatherby, seconded by Councillor Kennedy

“That Council supports the Village of Bible Hill’s application under the GRID funding program for a proposed project of 58 new concrete sidewalk ramps with tactile walking surface indicators.” Carried unanimously.

Jeff Mercer, Executive Director, Colchester A letter to Mayor Blair and Council dated September 18, 2025, regarding sponsorship for the 75th Anniversary Gala.

- East Hants Public Library
Brief discussion took place on the various 75th anniversary celebrations held recently in communities including Tatamagouche and Middle Stewiacke, as well as the importance of libraries.
- Moved by Councillor Johnson, seconded by Councillor Patton
- “That Council supports the Colchester East Hants Public Library’s 75th Anniversary Gala with Gold Level Sponsorship.” Carried unanimously.
- Eleanor Roulston,
Warden, Municipality of East Hants
A letter to the Mayor dated September 18, 2025, regarding the Municipality of East Hants collaborating with Colchester on the Colchester Regional Emergency Management Organization.
- Moved by Councillor Weatherby, seconded by Councillor Johnson
- “That the CAO be directed to continue discussion regarding East Hants joining Regional Emergency Management Organization.” Carried unanimously.
- Captain James Cripps,
Commanding Officer,
596 Phoenix Royal
Canadian Air Cadet
Squadron
A letter dated September 22, 2025, requesting permission from the Municipality to perform a fly-by, as well as land in an open field at 405 or 473 Upper River John Road.
- Moved by Councillor Martell, seconded by Councillor Fletcher
- “That Council supports the request from the 596 Phoenix Royal Canadian Air Cadet Squadron to allow 413 Transport & Rescue Squadron, Greenwood, to perform a Fly-by as well land as in an open field at 405 or 473 Upper River John Road as approved by property owners.” Carried unanimously.

Correspondence - INFORMATION

- Development Officer
A copy of Development Activity Report for August 2025.
- Building Inspector
A copy of Building Permit Statistics for August 2025.
- Moved by Deputy Mayor Sandeson, seconded by Councillor Johnson
- “That the reports from the Development Officer and Building Inspector be received.” Carried unanimously.
- Minister Fred Tilley,
Nova Scotia Public
Works
A letter to the Mayor dated September 15, 2025, regarding the renaming of the Bass River Bridge.
- Council agreed to receive the letter from NS Public Works Minister Tilley concerning the renaming of the Bass River Bridge for information.

INFORMATION ITEMS

- Regional Public Transit
Feasibility Study Update
This item provided Council with an update on the Regional Public Transit Feasibility Study. The report included the purpose of the study, the contracted consulting firm, past and upcoming stakeholder engagement, key findings from first round of engagement, draft service concepts, estimate costs of service concepts, and next steps in the process. The final report is scheduled for completion in early 2026.

During discussion, concern was raised with Valley being excluded, as well as the purchase of old versus new busses. Discussion was also held on fees for service, funding sources, communities, points of service, and further stakeholder engagement.

Dangerous or Unsightly Premises – Review of Process

The Municipal Solicitor advised that the report details the schematic for dangerous or unsightly process, which is governed by the Municipal Government Act and the Municipality's Dangerous or Unsightly By-law, which was introduced in 2023 and amended in 2024. Included was an overview of the process for complaints, demolition orders versus non-demolition orders, timelines for first and repeat offences, and appeal periods and processes. Overall, it is a fair and efficient process as demonstrated during a recent judicial review. It was also noted that Council members can file complaints, however, if the Council member filing the complaint serves on the committee, they cannot participate in the hearing.

Discussion took place on confidentiality of complaints. The Solicitor advised that all complaints are confidential, however, a complainant can self-disclose if they wish to do so. If a matter proceeds to a judicial review, the courts look at information as presented by staff and the Committee.

Reports from Council Members

Copies of reports from the Mayor and Councillors were circulated in the package and 'On Table' for this evening's meeting. Mayor Blair noted the one-year anniversary of the new Council and the CAO's recent email outlining Council members roles and responsibilities.

2025 NS Stampede

Councillor Patton spoke on the success of the 2025 NS Stampede, the 25,000 plus visitors daily – people from all over the world. Congratulations were extended to the organizers, sponsors, volunteers, participants, and RECC staff for a hugely successful, phenomenal event for our area.

CLOSED SESSION

Moved by Deputy Mayor Sandeson, seconded by Councillor Richardson

"That the meeting go into closed session at 7:36 pm." Carried unanimously.

Moved by Councillor Martell, seconded by Councillor Richardson

"That the meeting reconvene in open session at 8:40 pm." Carried unanimously.

Property Matter – Lot 2 MacElmon Road

Moved by Councillor Benoit, seconded by Councillor Patton

"That Council approves the Letter of Intent for the purchase of Lot #2 MacElmon Road as outlined in closed session." Carried unanimously.

Personnel – Collective Bargaining, CUPE Local 3945

Moved by Deputy Mayor Sandeson, seconded by Councillor Weatherby

"That Council approves the Collective Agreement for Local #3945, commencing July 1, 2025, as discussed in Closed Session, contingent upon ratification of same by CUPE Local 3945; and,

That the Mayor and CAO be authorized to sign the Agreement." Carried unanimously.

Award of Contract - Tidal Bore Road McClures Brook Multi-Use Trails

The Director of Community Development reported on the Award of Contract for the Tidal Bore Road McClures Brook Multi-use Trails. The report included detailed project information including two trails (one asphalt and one crusher dust) and a potential retaining wall component; Council's Active Transportation Strategy and approved capital budget of \$600K for these trails; project timelines; funding sources - 73.3% of the project is to be funded by

the Provincial Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP) and the remaining 27.3% from the Municipality; summary of all projects/funding approved under the ICIP application; and overall funding/resource implications. Also included were tender details, submissions received, and results. Based on Policy, the lowest compliant bid which was over budget by \$143,750 (excl. HST) was from Dexter Construction Company Ltd. The lowest bid submission did not have proper bonding as required by policy. Options were provided for consideration, and staff is recommending the contract be awarded to the lowest compliant bidder, Dexter Construction Company Ltd.

Key points raised during discussion included:

- pausing award of tender at this time, with timeline for funding availability to 2027;
- retendering at a later date as two separate projects;
- not in favour of spending money because it is available/ use of ICIP funding for other projects;
- cost overruns/budgetary implications;
- benefits of asphalt versus crusher dust - if chip seal could be a viable option as a means for cost savings;
- delays in awarding the contract not impacting the Fundy Discovery Site bridge project;
- using taxpayer's dollars/being fiscally responsible;
- issued as one tender to achieve better pricing;
- clarification on containing wall component changing tender process;
- review of bonding requirements and other forms of security.

On the issue of use of ICIP funds, the Director of Community Development indicated that approved ICIP funding focussed on five specific projects and funding can only be used for those purposes. The Municipal Solicitor spoke on changes to contract once awarded are not permitted if they fundamentally change the contract.

Referring to bonding requirements, the CAO indicated that information on alternative forms of security could be brought forward to a future meeting.

Moved by Councillor Johnson, seconded by Councillor Leggett

“That the contract for the Tidal Bore Road McClures Brook Multi-Use Trails not be awarded at this time.” Motion carried (*Mayor Blair, Councillors Richardson and Cooper opposed*).

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Councillor Martell, the meeting adjourned at 9:09 pm.

Tracey Veno
Recording Secretary